



**U.S. Department of Justice  
U.S. Attorney's Office  
Western District of Texas**

**Johnny Sutton, U.S. Attorney**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**ODESSA BUSINESSMAN PLEADS GUILTY TO THREE COUNTS OF VISA FRAUD**

United States Attorney Johnny Sutton announced today that 52 year-old Pete Natividad, of Odessa, Texas, has pleaded guilty to defrauding the United States Government. As part of his plea, he is cooperating with authorities with regard to others involved in similar conduct.

"Employers who defraud the immigration visa program should be on notice that law enforcement will come knocking when there is evidence that they are cheating the system," stated U.S. Attorney Johnny Sutton.

The defendant is the former owner of now defunct Taurus Environmental Services and Kokepeli Outscapes Management which provided landscape and environmental management services. During various periods, each company was approved by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services to employ foreign workers pursuant to the H2-B guest worker visa program.

Beginning in April 2004 and continuing until February 2005, Mr. Natividad engaged in a scheme to make money from Mexican citizens who wanted to legally work in the United States. Natividad defrauded the H2-B visa program by soliciting bribes from these Mexican citizens ranging from \$600 to \$1200 each and "sponsoring" them to work for one of his companies. Upon payment of the bribe, Natividad would supply the required paperwork to the Mexican citizens that allowed them to either obtain the H2-B visa to enter the United States or obtain visa extensions to remain in the United States under the H2-B visa program.

In truth, the Mexican workers who paid bribes to the defendant never worked for Taurus Environmental Services or Kokepeli Outscapes Management, in contravention of H2-B program rules and Natividad's representations to the U.S. Government. Instead, the Mexican citizens took jobs elsewhere in the United States.

"ICE will not tolerate individuals who exploit America's immigration system and threaten our nation's security," said Roberto G. Medina, special agent in charge of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Office of Investigations in El Paso. "ICE will be relentless in its efforts to detect, investigate and - with the assistance of the U.S. Attorney's Office - prosecute them to the fullest extent of the law."

The defendant made approximately \$50,000 by soliciting bribes from Mexican workers to be admitted under the umbrella of the approved H-2B petitions of his companies. As part of his plea he has agreed to forfeit to the government the \$50,000 he made from his scheme. Sentencing will be in November 2007, where he faces up to 10 years in federal prison and a \$250,000 fine. This case is being prosecuted by Immigration and Customs Enforcement and is being prosecuted for the government by Assistant United States Attorney John Klassen.

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